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Executive Registry

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SECRET


TO: : NSC - Mr. Michael O. Wheeler
CIA -
DOD - COL John Stanford

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SUBJECT: Restricted Interagency Meeting on Pakistan's
Nuclear Program

Pursuant to Judge Clark's memorandum of November 8, we are convening a meeting at the State Department on Thursday, November 18 at 10:30 a.m. to discuss a recommendation for the President regarding what he should say to Pakistan President Zia about the Pakistani nuclear program when Zia visits the U.S. next month. The meeting will be in Room 7207 and will be chaired by Under Secretary of State Richard T. Kennedy. We shall appreciate your sending a SIG-level representative to this meeting.

A paper on the nuclear issue is attached. As it is unusually sensitive, it should be given the minimum distribution necessary.


E. Paul Bremer, III
Executive Secretary

Attachment:

Nuclear Issue Paper

State Dept. review completed

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DECLASSIFY ON: 11/15/02



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Subject: Conveying U.S. Position on Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons Program to President Zia during his December Visit

ISSUE FOR DECISION

As requested by Judge Clark in his memorandum of November 8, State, DOD, CIA and the NSC staff should agree on a recommendation to the President so that our position and strategy on Pakistan's nuclear program can be decided prior to the President's meeting on December 7 with General Zia. The key issue raised in the four options examined in this paper is whether the President should tell Zia as an Executive Branch position that if the Pakistan nuclear program continues the U.S. will terminate or suspend its assistance programs; whether or the President should take some lesser action such as delivering a strong warning. If we select the former course, we will first have to determine that if Zia ignores our warning we will, in fact, terminate or suspend our assistance. The course we take could therefore have profound significance for our Afghanistan and Southwest Asian strategy as well as for our non-proliferation policy.

ESSENTIAL FACTORS

A. Pakistan's Nuclear Program

Pakistan is in the advanced stage of a nuclear weapons development program.

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B. Our Earlier Approach to the Problem

Our policy has been to work with other nuclear supplier countries to block sensitive nuclear exports to Pakistan and thus slow the nuclear explosives program. Moreover, we have hoped that over the longer term a program of U.S. assistance which provides Pakistan with a continuing relationship with a significant security partner will help remove the principal underlying incentive for the acquisition of a nuclear weapons capability. As the elements of that relationship were put in place, we have been trying to persuade Pakistan that the pursuit of a weapons capability is neither necessary to its security nor in its broader interest. (A weak point in this argument is that our security assistance and assurances are provided against the USSR, while Pakistan sees its major threat coming from India.) Last year we received assurances from Zia that Pakistan would not manufacture nuclear weapons, not transfer sensitive nuclear technology, and not "embarrass" us on the nuclear issue while we are providing aid (which we both understand to constitute a no-nuclear test pledge). In July, Dick Walters warned Zia that if Pakistan's newly discovered effort to procure nuclear weapons components did not cease, or if unsafeguarded reprocessing were begun, it was virtually certain that Congress would terminate the aid program. Zia categorically denied the truth of our allegations and assured us for the first time that Pakistan would not manufacture a nuclear explosive device of any kind. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Secretary Shultz warned Yaqub Khan in September, and Walters again warned Zia [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] in October, that the aid program was in grave jeopardy. Zia again denied the accuracy of our intelligence and expanded his assurance to cover the development as well as the manufacture of any sort of nuclear explosive device.

Because of the vehemence of Zia's denials we recently reviewed our intelligence and concluded with absolute confidence that it is genuine and accurate. [REDACTED]

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C. U.S.-Pakistan Relations

In making these approaches, we were mindful of the essential role Pakistan plays in a number of areas of U.S. concern, particularly in support to the Afghan resistance. Since our opposition to the Soviets in Afghanistan is clearly the most visible evidence of the U.S. commitment to counter Soviet military thrusts worldwide, sustaining our new relationship with Pakistan bears directly on U.S. global, as well as regional, interests. The fighting in Afghanistan also constitutes a continuing drain on Soviet resources. Pakistan has also helped at times to advance U.S. interests among the nonaligned and with other Islamic countries. Over the longer term we would also hope that U.S.-Pak relations would evolve to the point where we could closely coordinate our efforts in certain types of Southwest Asian military contingencies.

We can expect our aid program to come under public and Congressional scrutiny in the coming weeks. Our briefings of Congressional leaders on our intelligence on the Pakistani nuclear program, our coming request to the Congress for reprogramming authority for our security assistance for Pakistan, and the Zia visit will attract attention, but we do not expect a serious move to cut off assistance during the lame duck session.

D. Non-Proliferation Policy

Pakistan's nuclear explosives program also presents the most visible challenge to U.S. non-proliferation policy and threatens other U.S. interests in South and Southwest Asia as a whole. Over the last five years we have put our prestige behind demarches to our allies in an unprecedented campaign to prevent the export of sensitive nuclear equipment to Pakistan. If we put other foreign policy objectives ahead of non-proliferation, we will pay a considerable price. A nuclear arms race on the subcontinent would be destabilizing, possibly resulting in the pre-emption by India or Israel or even a

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nuclear exchange. Either of these would seriously weaken U.S. Southwest Asia strategy. Eventual transfer of nuclear technology or weapons by Pakistan cannot be excluded. U.S. tolerance of Pakistani nuclear activities, which may well involve safeguards violations, would weaken the international norm against proliferation with uncertain but undoubtedly negative consequences for U.S. security.

The question of how best to prevent these outcomes is discussed in the Analysis of Options below.

ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

The issue is what the President and other senior U.S. officials should tell President Zia and his advisers in the course of their December visit.

OPTION 1

Zia is told that if the program to procure components and to develop and manufacture a nuclear explosive device continues, or if international safeguards are violated, the U.S. will terminate economic and military assistance to Pakistan. We should not, of course, pursue this option unless, if necessary, we intend to follow through and terminate aid. Proponents of this course argue that it would dispel any Pakistani view that the President would ultimately persuade Congress that our assistance would continue despite the Pakistani program. They argue that if we ultimately intend to pursue this course, we should do it now while there is some hope of deterring Pakistan.

Proponents of this option believe that further deferral of a basic decision on termination of aid (as in Option 3 and 4 below) would let slip our last and best chance to make clear the depth of U.S. concern about the Pakistani nuclear program. They argue that if we defer a decision, the Congress will in any case attempt to cut off assistance. If the Administration succeeded in defending the program, it would implicitly acknowledge that because of our interests in Afghanistan, the U.S. would accept at least some continuation of the Pakistani nuclear weapons program. Whether the Administration succeeded or failed in its defense, it would grievously damage the credibility of its non-proliferation policy.

Proponents of Option 1 note that by failing to draw the line at nuclear weapons manufacture, the only remaining line

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would be at a nuclear test. By redefining the objective of our non-proliferation policy to prevent tests, we would fail to prevent a nuclear arms race on the subcontinent, undercut the practical value of our non-proliferation policy, and act contrary to the spirit of our Non-Proliferation Treaty obligations.

OPTION 2

Since Option 1 presents the President with a stark and difficult choice, we might consider a variation in which the President would tell Zia that the continuation of efforts to procure components and to develop and manufacture a nuclear explosive, or the conduct of any unsafeguarded reprocessing, would cause us to reassess our relationship with Pakistan. While reminding President Zia of the recent delivery of six F-16s, the President would point out that during any reassessment, we would not be in a position to continue deliveries of any major military equipment.

Proponents of this option believe that it is important to deter unsafeguarded reprocessing because that would provide the Pakistanis with weapons-usable material which might be free of any international controls. This would be the final element needed in the capability to manufacture a nuclear weapon. The credibility of our non-proliferation policy would be seriously undermined if we were seen as acquiescing in a Pakistani capability to manufacture and deploy nuclear weapons. Moreover, even if the Pakistanis were not to test a device, it is likely that India would react strongly to such a situation.

A major advantage of this option is that it conveys for the first time a tangible indication of the seriousness of our purpose but gives the Pakistanis more time to reconsider the direction of their nuclear program. Like Option 1, it would also dispel any belief that Zia may harbor that we would defend the aid package in Congress in spite of the Pakistani nuclear explosives program. At the same time, it provides some flexibility to tailor our actions with respect to future deliveries of military and economic assistance to Pakistani actions.

OPTION 3

The President tells Zia that if the program to procure components and to develop and manufacture a nuclear explosive device continues, or if there is unsafeguarded reprocessing, it

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would seriously jeopardize our ability to provide military and economic assistance to Pakistan. This option would increase the pressure on Zia to restrict Pakistan's nuclear weapons-related activities without binding the Administration to any particular course of future action. It would also avoid confronting Zia on his U.S. visit with a notice that our new assistance relationship was being made conditional, calling into question U.S. credibility and reliability as a friend and supporter of Pakistani security. The proponents of this option believe that it is premature to decide now how closely to link Pakistani nuclear activities with U.S. aid, since [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] nor the direction of thinking on the Hill, are entirely clear at this time. They believe Options 1 and 2 would almost certainly do serious damage to vital U.S. security interest in Afghanistan and Southwest Asia and remove any residual influence over the future direction of Pakistan's nuclear program. They argue that as long as our aid program continues, we can be relatively certain that Pakistan will not test a nuclear device and that we will be better able to encourage restraint and compliance with their safeguards obligations.

Proponents of this option point out that if the Congress terminates our assistance programs despite the Administration's support of their continuation, we would be in a considerably better position to try to salvage essential elements of the relationship with Pakistan than if the Administration itself took the lead in conditioning our assistance as in Options 1 and 2. Others disagree, noting that Zia is unlikely to differentiate between Congress and the Executive Branch in placing responsibility for a termination of assistance.

OPTION 4

Zia is told by the President that the U.S. remains concerned about the direction of the Pakistani nuclear program, that it has carefully considered Pakistan's assurances on its nuclear activities, and that violation of those assurances by a nuclear test, the manufacture of nuclear devices, the transfer of nuclear explosives technology to another country or a material violation of IAEA safeguards would force the U.S. to reconsider its assistance programs. This course is different from Option 1 (and similar to Option 2) in that it would not rigidly commit us to terminate aid if Pakistan carried out the specified nuclear activities. It is different from Options 1, 2 and 3 in that it would permit the Pakistanis to carry out unsafeguarded reprocessing (which they are about to begin) and to procure

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components and machinery for fabrication of components of a nuclear device (which they are continuing to do) providing they did not actually manufacture the device. Proponents of this option believe there is a strong possibility that Pakistan would agree to this formulation and abide by it.

Unlike the other options, this course avoids stating the issue in terms of a continuation of present Pakistani activities. While this course would be seen by those briefed on the Hill as a backing away from what the President sent Walters to seek last July and October, and could engender efforts by them against U.S. aid, proponents believe this course alone can avoid a near-term confrontation between the U.S. and Pakistan, probably resulting in a termination of assistance, damage to our interests in the region, and an unrestrained Pakistani and Indian push for nuclear weapons.

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